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# In Memoriam: Professor Dr. Wilhelm A. Kewenig

Jost Delbruck

*Indiana University Maurer School of Law*

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In memoriam  
PROFESSOR DR. WILHELM A. KEWENIG

\* 20. 6. 1934 — † 18. 6. 1993

On 18 June 1993, Professor Dr. *Wilhelm A. Kewenig*, LL.M. (Harvard), former director of the Institute of International Law at the University of Kiel, suddenly passed away shortly before his 59th birthday.

*Wilhelm Kewenig* was born on 20 June 1934 in Cologne. He studied law at the University of Bonn and at the American University of Beirut, Lebanon. He received a doctorate in law at the University of Cologne in 1962. His dissertation on „Die Koexistenz der Religionsgemeinschaften im Libanon“ (The coexistence of the religious communities in Lebanon) was the outcome of his previous stay and research at the American University. During the following years, *Kewenig* worked as a research assistant to Professor *Ulrich Scheuner* at the University of Bonn. The Bonn years, which had a decisive impact on his personal and scholarly development and which resulted in long lasting and close friendships, were considered by *Kewenig* as a particularly happy and rewarding period of his life. With the help of a research grant from the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (the German Research Council), *Kewenig* spent two years at Harvard Law School, where he not only received the LL.M. degree, but also prepared his post-doctoral thesis (Habilitationsschrift) on „Der Grundsatz der Nichtdiskriminierung im Völkerrecht der internationalen Handelsbeziehungen“ (the principle of non-discrimination in the law of international trade relations). Under the academic guidance of *Ulrich Scheuner*, *Kewenig* received his post-doctoral degree (Habilitation), and shortly thereafter (in 1971) he was appointed to the second chair at the Institute of International Law at Kiel University. He joined *Eberhard Menzel* in the directorship of the Institute which he had to carry on alone after *Menzel* fell seriously ill little more than a year later. As co-editor of the *Jahrbuch für Internationales Recht* he reshaped the Yearbook into what it has become, widely known and recognized as the German Yearbook of International Law. He also continued the series of biennial symposia which had been initiated by *Eberhard Menzel* and which have brought together German and international law scholars and practitioners ever since.

In a few years time, *Kewenig* had become an integral part not only of the Institute of International Law but also of Kiel University. In a politically turbulent

time, he was willing to stand for election as Rector of Christiana Albertina, his second academic home after Bonn University. He performed his duties with energy and courage and gained high recognition within and outside the University, and the respect of those who did not share his vision of the role of the university in a time of rapid social change. It was to no small extent his successful performance as Rector which determined much of his future professional life. After he had stepped down as Rector, *Kewenig* was called to serve on the Wissenschaftsrat (Federal Science Council), a deliberative body advising the government on science policies) and soon was elected to the chair of the Council. In 1979 he returned to the Institute of International Law and resumed his research and teaching tasks. During this period, he published several important writings on domestic broadcasting law, a field which formed a major research interest, as did international and constitutional law problems of the divided Germany, international economic law, and the legal relationship between Church and State. *Kewenig's* return to his Institute and chair did not last for long.

As early as the 1970s, *Kewenig* had joined the Christian Democratic Party. He did so out of a sincere sense of the scholar's responsibility to participate in the practical political process of his country. His service in important positions in a number of scientific-political organizations such as the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Auswärtige Politik (German Society for Foreign Policy) and Deutsche Gesellschaft für die Vereinten Nationen (German Society for the United Nations) was indicative of this sense of responsibility. In addition, he gained important experience in combining scholarly expertise with practical politics when he served in the party platform commission of the Christian Democrats and in the enquête task force of the Deutsche Bundestag regarding a reform of the Basic Law. Thus, already being involved in *rebus publicis*, it was, in a way, a logical step to agree to serve as a Senator for Science and Culture in the Berlin State Government under Regierender Bürgermeister (Mayor) of Berlin, *Richard von Weizsäcker*, in May 1981. This first appointment to a high political office was followed by two further appointments to the office of Senator for Science and Research and that of the Senator of the Interior of Berlin. When his party lost the state elections in Berlin at the turn of the year 1989/1990, *Kewenig* left politics altogether after eight years of active service. Yet he did not return to academia. Following the example of his long standing friend, *F. A. Mann*, he decided to become a lawyer. He joined the well known law firm of *Hengeler, Mueller, Weitzel, Wirtz* in Frankfurt / M., but remained in touch with academic life. He taught courses at Frankfurt University and in the years 1990 — 1992 he published several impressive articles in leading law journals on such topical issues as the future of the European Community, the International Tin Council, and legal issues related to the unification of Germany. Thus, *Kewenig* did not consider his new start in Frankfurt as a clear cut break with his professional past. Rather he saw it as challenge to weave together the different threads of experience, unfolding his rich intellectual and

personal capabilities in a new way. His sudden death has torn him away from his unfinished work. He will be sorely missed among his friends and colleagues.

*Jost Delbrück*